



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**



Indian Education Division
Montana Office of Public Instruction
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www.opi.mt.gov/IndianEd

Fort Owen State Park Indian Education For All Lesson Plan

Title

Fort Owen: *Cultural Crossroad of the Bitterroot Valley*

Content Area(s)

Social Studies; Media Literacy

Grade level

4th

Duration

Two 30 minute blocks of time

Goals (Montana Standards/Essential Understandings)

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 1: There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

Social Studies Content Standard 4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

Speaking and Listening Content Standard 4: Students identify, analyze, and evaluate the impacts of effective speaking and evaluative listening.

Reading Content Standard 5: Students gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and communicate their findings in ways appropriate for their purposes and audiences.

Overview

“He [John Owen] built Fort Owen; made it a rallying point hundreds of miles from any other white settlement; became the Indians’ friend; represented the Government for six critical years in dealing with them...”

In this lesson plan students will use information gathered about the native people of western Montana and selected entries from a variety of sources, including the journals and letters of John Owen and other early Bitterroot Valley settlers, to learn about the rich history of the Bitterroot valley. Student will also explore the relationship between the Bitterroot Salish people of western Montana and the non-native people, represented by explorers, fur traders, and the settlers.

Objectives

The students will know that:

- Native people, like the Salish, lived in the Bitterroot Valley for thousands of years.
- The Bitterroot Valley was recognized, by the Native people, as a land of abundance, a land rich in natural resources and a diversity of plant and animal species. It should also be recognized as a cultural landscape, managed and maintained by the Native peoples who have lived in the region for generations.

The students will know that non-native people:

- Came to the Bitterroot Valley for a variety of reasons;
- Brought with them their own cultures (attitudes and values);
- Interacted with the native population resulting in cooperation and conflict; and
- Adapted and/or created technology within a new environment

Students will:

- Access, organize and present information; and
- Identify various changes that took place during this time period.

Students will:

- Appreciate and value the cultures and traditions of various peoples

Suggested Teaching Approaches

- Involve students in the planning of learning experiences about the Bitterroot Salish and other tribes with connections to the Bitterroot Valley. These tribes include the Nez Perce, the Kootenai, the Blackfeet, and the Shoshone (Snake) as well as the explorers, fur traders, and the early settlers. These planned experiences may include: the gathering of information about the native people of western Montana, a visit to Fort Owen State Park, museum visits, simulation activities, and role playing. Compose questions related to these topics. Make plans for accessing, organizing, and presenting information.
- Use of literature material, biographies of the local people, and oral histories is encouraged.
- Information may be organized and shared in a variety of ways, including: maps, graphs, charts, posters, pictures, dioramas, models, displays, interviews, and stories.
- Develop, with the students, a timeline while discussing briefly what was happening in Europe and the rest of North America during the time Fort Owen was in operation.
- Learn about ways Indians helped the explorers, fur traders, and early settlers to the Bitterroot Valley.
- Create a chart identifying differences in cultures.

- Encourage the students to learn about adapting technology to the environment and how different groups shared their technologies.

Materials or Resources Needed

- Selected entries from *The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871* (provided in lesson plan – Attachment A)
- Background Information (provided in lesson plan – Attachment B)
- KHWL Chart (provided in lesson plan – Attachment C)
- Student notebooks, pencils/pens, paper, classroom board
- Computers, Internet, Word Processing program
 - Internet access to the following websites.

www.canadiana.org/hbc/stories/aboriginals1_e.html

(How the native people helped the early explorers and traders)

www.his.state.mt.us/education/footlocker/FurTrading.pdf

pgs 22-24

(Montana fur trade information, including lesson plans)

www.cskt.org/hc/salishculture.htm

(History of the Salish people of Montana)

http://fwp.mt.gov/news/article_2964.aspx

Article about Mrs. Mary Ann Toppseh Combs of Arlee was the last surviving member of the Salish Indian band of about 250-300 people forced in 1891 from the Bitterroot to the Jocko valley to the Flathead Indian Reservation

www.fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors/HTML/Articles/2005/CouncilGrove.htm

(Flathead reservation history and the Hellgate treaty)

<http://leemetcalf.fws.gov/cultural2.html>

(Bitterroot Salish history)

www.cskt.org/documents/gov/helgatetreaty.pdf

(Text of Hellgate Treaty)

http://fwp.mt.gov/lands/site_280846.aspx

(Fort Owen State Park information)

www.nps.gov/nepe/greene/chap6.htm

(Fort Owen and the Flight of the Nez Perce – 1877)

Extensions

Invite a Salish Tribal Member to your classroom to learn about the language and tribal history.

Check out these great books to learn more about Salish Stories and Bitterroot valley History.

Coyote stories of the Montana Salish Indians by Johnny Arlee
Salish Kootenai College Press, 1999.

Stories From our Elders

Salish Culture Committee Publications

In the Name of the Salish & Kootenai Nation

Bigart,, Robert, Clarence Woodcock ed. Salish Kootenai College Press
1996

First Roots: The Story of Stevensville, Montana's Oldest Community

The Discovery Writers, Stoneydale Press 2005

Montana Genesis; a History of the Stevensville area of the Bitterroot Valley
Stevensville Historical Society, Mountain Press Pub. Co. 1971

Activities

KWHL Chart

Use the instructional technique known as K-W-H- L, to activate students' prior knowledge by asking them what they already **Know**; then students (collaborating as a classroom unit or within small groups) set goals specifying what they **Want** to learn; students then will determine **How** they will find information related to the topic; and after reading students will ***prepare a classroom presentation*** discussing what they have **Learned**. Students apply higher-order thinking strategies which help them construct meaning from what they read and help them monitor their progress toward their goals. A worksheet is given to every student that includes columns for each of these activities. Suggested KWHL emphasis:

(or)

What I KNOW about the Bitterroot Salish.

**What I WANT to Know about the Bitterroot Salish.
Owen.**

HOW will I find information about the Bitterroot Salish.

What I LEARNED about the Bitterroot Salish.

What I KNOW about Fort Owen.

What I WANT to Know about Fort

**HOW will I find information about Fort
Owen.**

What I LEARNED about Fort Owen.

EVALUATION:

Discussion/observation

Participation

Completed worksheet

Classroom presentation

Attachment A

Blackfeet and Fort Owen

Selected journal entries

From: Dunbar, Seymour, Paul C. Phillips ed. *The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871.* Edward Eberstadt New York 1927 ; p. 1

September 15, 1852 – Horses stolen- Dodson killed (John F. Dodson came to FO in the spring of 1853 from Buffalo Grove, Illinois. He was putting up hay when killed by the Blackfeet. According to Duncan McDonald a Métis who was with him.)

October 3, 1853My old Nez Perce friend leaves me this morning. I made some small presents by way of keeping on the fair side for some time may need his services. The grass here is excellent and it would make a fine summering ground for stock out of reach of Blackfeet and I think I shall adopt it in future as best course to come together another good band of animals....

July 15, 1854 My animals taking advantage of the liberty I gave them last night went far. The horse guard returned after an hour or two's hunt without them. My suspicions were aroused.... The Blackfeet may have during the night entered into camp and run them off..

Nov 8th , 1854.. trade slow alarm of Blackfeet

Nov 20, 1854 Last night we were again alarmed by something stirring around the camp which the women and Manual swore it was Blackfeet.. we sat up watching and scouting around until we became satisfies that the alarm was false

Feb 28, 1855 .. saw no Blackfeet except the last day they were fired upon by a war party some 15 miles up Hells gate defile.. they were following the camp, no doubt.

May 11, 1856.. The Blackfeet came down this morning on their way home. I was surprised by at the present I received from Keitse Pem Sa which was a fine English Double Barrel gun with some 18 balls for the same.. I took it but had nothing to give him in return but gave him to understand I would not forget.....

May 18, 1856 Late last evening had another arrival of Blackfeet, two men and two women, one of the men was dressed in the most fantastic manner and wore an English medal..

June 1, 1856 Some Blackfeet here this morning about starting home, exchanged a horse with one his being thin and tenderfooted Made them some trifling presents for the road

March 1, 1868 News from the Flathead camp.. they are coming in.. Buffalo close and plenty. Had some skirmishes with Blackfeet

Agriculture in the Bitterroot Valley
Selected entries from the Journals of
Thomas W. Harris
Bitterroot Valley, Montana, 1860-1868

May 1860

Frid, 25 Today clere and warm. Potatoes coming up and a few onions, the last planted. Today I finished shed in front of house and made table and shelves in milk house.

Sat, 26 Today cool south wind and part of day cloudy. This evening a light shower of rain. Today I have not felt well, having caught a cold

Sund, 27 Today clere and pleasant. Irvine down from above. Today [Chief] Victor drove his cows down for Lisette to milk

Mond, 28 To day warm and pleasant. Indians moved camp for Camash ground. Today irrigated garden.

Tues, 29 Warm and looks like rain. Today irrigating. Wheat & Potatoes begin to look well.

Thur, 31 Warm & cloudy. This evening west wind. To day watering of wheat. Most of onions not up yet.

June 1860

Wedns, 13 Warm and has been raining quite hard since noon and is still raining and looks very much like it might rain all knight. I hope it will. Today set out sixty cabbage plants.

Thurs. 14 Warm & Cloudy. Rained a little this morning. Irvine went home this morning. Myself and wife took a ride on Burnt fork to day to see the Indians' wheat. It looks well tho I saw none that looked any better than mine.

Frid, 15 Cloudy & showery all day. Last knight a hard rain and looks as tho it might rain again to knight. Today I transplanted some Beets. The river is falling fast. It has now fell some two feet or more in the last four days.

Mon, 18 This morning clere and warm. This evening cloudy with a good shower of rain. Today ground the last of my wheat. Seven bushels. I have now about five hundred pounds of flour on hand. This evening I set out fifty six Cabbage plants.

October 1860

Wed, 25 Today Cloudy. Put in my wagon tounge & this evening I hauled in my flour from mill & sold to Mr. Owen 1006 pounds at 15 cts per pound.

November 1865

Mon, 6th Clear & pleasant. Today I went to mill & Back. Men husking corn.

Tues, 7th Clear & pleasant. Today Myself & brother loaded Mr. Slack with 250 bushels of Potatoes on freight at five cents per pound to Gold Creek. This evening Mr. Pattee up from Hell Gate for one hundred bushels of Potatoes bought of Bro Ben.

Wed, 8th Clear & pleasant. Today I started four wagons loaded with Potatoes for Gold Creek & will start myself tomorrow with four more loaded with flour & other vegetables.

April 1866

Wed 11th Cloudy & rain. Today I planted 12 twelve large beds of Onions.

Thu 12th Cloudy rain & blustry. Today Stewart plowing. Mr. Valient & myself planting Onions & not done yet. The work is so very tedious.

High Spirits at the Fort

Theme: Hospitality & Celebration

Fort Owen, located some 700 miles from establishment with similar accommodations, provided a slice of Euro-American civilization in a remote, and often threatening wilderness. James A. Garfield who became the twentieth president of the United States in 1881, comments on John Owen's lifestyle in this 1872 diary entry. ..*"He (referring to John Owen) seems to have lived like a prince here in the wilderness."* He also noted Owen's *"fine wines and luxurious appointments"* were enjoyed by many army officers who have served in the west.

Father Pallidino, a Jesuit from St. Ignatius, describes Owen in this way: *"Major Owen lived at the Fort like a King. He was a ruler. He had many guests at the Fort, and was famed for his hospitality to his guests and to transient travelers passing through the region. He was a man of very lovable, kindly and generous character, and the most influential pioneer in the country for years. He was esteemed and trusted by the Indians as well as by the whites. His word was always good. When hostile tribes of Indians threatened one another he would interpose, and, if it was possible soothe them, compose the differences and avert the trouble. At the Christmas holiday time it was his custom to give a general feast for many people of the region."*

Celebrations for such holidays as Christmas and the Fourth of July provided a departure from the usual "fort" routine for the inhabitants and visitors. Owen, who always seemed up for a party, provided detailed comments in his journals related to the nature of these events.

Selected journal entries

From: Dunbar, Seymour, Paul C. Phillips ed. *The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871*.
Edward Eberstadt New York 1927 ; p. 1

"December 31, 1855... Another year has closed upon us... We had a pleasant Christmas with some of the good things of this world, sufficient Brandy for punches and Mince pies which were got up in very good style, at least we all thought so, from the demonstrations made when the cook placed them before us at dinner..."

"January 1, 1857... The year commenced with unusual severity... Capt. Chase and Brother Frank got up a nice pudding for our New years dinner and Mrs. Chase gave a tea party to my old wife and ladies of the fort, about the first one ever having been given here by a lady. The only objection urged was that the gentlemen were excluded entirely, let it pass for we gents spent a pleasant evening in a game of whist which was beautifully wound up with a lunch and a bowl of hot punch"...

"January 1, 1861... the Christmas week as passed and we wind up the holidays with a party tonight. In fact, it has been nothing but dancing and feasting for the last past ten nights. Mr. Blake, Irvine, and Harris have reflected much credit on themselves for the very liberal manner in which they contributed to the comfort and amusement of the stranger guests - The one armed fiddler much amused the bleached crowned doctor... In fact, it was a long time to be remembered in the Rocky Mountains. Our grandchildren will have it handed down to them by their ancestors..."

December 26th, 1862

Christmas is past and gone. The surprise the ladies gave us last evening has sharpened the appetite of Mr. Harris and the rest of the gent here to show on new years eve what Fort Owen could do. So notes of invitation were properly and duly enclosed in handsome medicated enveloped and dispatched at an early hour this morning to sweep the circuit of not less than 70 english miles. The ladies of this country think nothing of riding 100 miles to a dance. They enter the spirit of such things with a true and wholesome whim. Indefatigable perserverance they can honestly boast of. Mrs. Peters is a pleasant lady of German origin. Like myself is a good judge of crout.

“December 25, 1865The most quiet Christmas I have ever seen at the Fort.... The health and happiness of friends far away was drank [to] by all hands”

“January 1, 1867...Notwithstanding the severity of the morning, the natives made their usual time honored calls, giving all a hearty shake of the hand. The Old Chief Victor with hair still black as a coal - gave our Philadelphia friends a short recital of things that occurred some 70 odd years ago. Told them that he as a good sized boy when those Transcontinental explorers, Lewis and Clark, passed here, which was in 1805.. How well he holds his own. His agility would astonish anyone. He can jump upon the back of his horse with as much spryness as the youngest of his people....”

“December 25, 1867 .. We have spent our Christmas in the mill, while friends in distant lands were spending theirs in the good old way. My cook gave us a very fine dinner. Roast chicken, took the place of turkey. We had nice mince pies, cakes, tarts and doughnuts, all of which was relished hugely. Had no strangers to dinner...”

Fourth of July

“July 4, 1867...Another national anniversary has rolled around. With us it has been as quiet as any other day, not a julep or a toddy to stir up ones patriotism and remind him of the convivial parties in the more civilized portion of the continent....”

“July 4, 1854.... Made some demonstrations for our 78 anniversary, raised our national stars and stripes....”

“July 4, 1864 ... A gun at sunrise from our 6 lb howitzer announced the 89th anniversary of our national independence. I trust that the time honored flag that we inherited from our fathers does this day wave over every foot of our territory...”

“July 4, 1868... A glorious morning for the glorious 4th, the day we celebrate...No juleps.....”

Selected journal entries

From: Dunbar, Seymour, Paul C. Phillips ed. *The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871.* Edward Eberstadt New York 1927 ; p. 1

June 27, 1854

Day pleasant and busy casting bullets for trade J.O. birthday, 36 yrs old.

June 27, 1856

Brooks received this morning from the mission having camped a short distance below the fort last night. From the mission I received some papers from below in one of which I find rather a spicy communication between Gov Stevens and General Wool, in which I think his excellency rather slurs

him. I also see that Mr. Jas. Sinclair was killed at the Cascades with some twelve others whom I did not know. Your humble servant Jno Owen is 38 years old this day of the Lord.

June 27, 1862

Victor again visited me. Made him a present. Mr. Harris crops look fine. Jno Owen is 44 years old today. He is on the shady side of the hill of time. Many pleasant winters may yet be in store for him. The sequel will show. The waters that have been high are gradually receding. The river is again within it's banks.

June 27, 1865

This is my 47th birthday. This day, a year ago, I was with some friends in No.54 Pacific House St. Joseph. And if my memory serves me properly we had wine and Juleps.

The day here my 47 year passed off quietly. I have made my usual rounds first at the Miller and then at the farm and so back and on the bolting shaft. Mr. Winds is mortising his driving wheel.

Devenpeck work on the main and counter shaft Brooks whitewashing outer walls of the fort It makes things look much better. My last planting of potatoes not all up yet I fear there will be a poor stand of them. 5 o'clock pm, a gentle shower of rain. "Brooks gone home"

June 27, 1865

Ice water is quite acceptable. Grasshoppers again working on my young trees Not being satisfied with having stripped them they are now attempting to girdle them. I am discouraged truly. The author of this record is 47 years old this day. Waters receding some.

still too high for good trout fishing There the trout have so fine a harvest of grasshoppers that land in myriads in the streams that they are not eager for the fly. Mosquitoes commenced to make their appearance. Potato bugs cutting potato vines. What next. Time will reveal.

June 27, 1868

This is the 50th birthday for the author of this diary. I have spent it in the garden. Maj. Graham very kindly assisted Blake dress his cabbage, we are short handed and have a large garden to attend to. Beside Blake has his hogs, some 100 large and small to look over. It has cleared off and very warm after the rain. Mr. Talbot, the miller, gone below. Mr. Thos Simpson down from Willow Creek. They are making preparations for a picnic for the coming 4th of July. A pleasant time is anticipated. Blake's peas look well, in fact his entire garden is not behind any in the country. Ice water very acceptable. The ice is keeping well, from appearances shall not use one third of amount put up

June 27, 1869

No rain, the country is burnt up. Some crops destroyed with the drought. Things look gloomy. The author of this record is 51 years old today.

Chief Victor of the Bitterroot Salish at Fort Owen

Selected journal entries

From: Dunbar, Seymour, Paul C. Phillips ed. *The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871.* Edward Eberstadt New York 1927 ; p. 1

December 13th, 1862

Men fixing up school room for the children which will commence on Monday morning. Had a visit from Old Chief Victor. I am building him a house close to the fort. This is the first time since I have known him, which has been 12 years, that he has not gone with his camp to buff. I dissuaded him from it last fall. He is quite old and affirm. I told him if he would remain with me, that he should have a good comfortable house to live in and a field to sow and plant for himself. Would that more of them would listen to the same wholesome arguments. But they are Indians and Indians they will ever remain. To Christianize, civilize and educate the Indian is a farce long since exploded. The dept at Washington knows no more about the management of the Indian tribe than the Indians do about the cause of the present war.

December 24th, 1862

Butchered a young steer I purchased of the old chief Victor. Mr. Harris also butchered another fine mutton. Preparations are going on for a family (Christmas) dinner on to morrow. Mrs. Harris sent me a few doz eggs to morrow. The party will certainly will certainly toast her with will filled goblets

January 14th, 1857

....Chief Victor paid me a visit with a present of buff tongues

Jany 21, 1857

... The Indians are moving their camp above to be more convenient to the wood... Had a visit from Old Victor. The Indians have lost a good many horses owing to the severity of the weather and snow

April 21, 1857

..Had a visit from Victor the head chief who came up from the mission yesterday

May 9, 1857

...Victor and some of the principal men of the camp rode up to have a talk before they left the valley

March 4, 1858

..had a visit from Victor today the main flathead chief, the camp is short of meat.

Jany 20 1862

Had a visit from old chief victor making complaint against a William Rogers who he had entrusted with \$50 in Gold Dust to take to Hells Gate and invest in sugar and coffee for him/ Rogers, it is true made an investment in groceries. But unfortunately they were wet groceries and produced such a strange effect on the upper story of the aforesaid Rogers that he lost sight of everything, more particularly the old Chief's sugar and coffee

Jany 25, 1862

Had a visit from Old chief victor

Jany 27, 1862.

had a visit from old chief victor and a present from Delaware Jim of a fine blk tailed nicely dressed buck skin

Mar 2, 1862

..had a visit from old chief victor. He was giving me news from the camp at buffalo. He says his people are in most destitute condition. No game to subsist on, the Blackfeet are stealing their horses and some sickness and a few deaths.

Mar 10, 1862

..had a visit from old chief victor and Delaware Jim both hungry for tobacco which I am very short of myself consequently I dole it out to them but sparingly

Mar 11, 1862

... had another visit from the old chief.. he seems quite fond of visiting the fort of late

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Fort Owen State Park

Fort Owen State Park, in the Bitterroot Valley of Western Montana, is located at the site of the historic trading post Fort Owen. John Owen, a licensed trader for the military, purchased, in 1850, the property of the St. Mary's mission. It was here that he established Fort Owen and for over 20 years it was an important frontier trading post. During his time in Montana, John Owen, traveled over 23,000 miles.

In 1956 the State of Montana acquired the site and it now administered by Montana State Parks as a State Monument. It was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

Fort Owen State Park, with its 1860's barracks, homestead cabin, and other on-site interpretive information provides educators a unique opportunity for insights into the natural and cultural history of western Montana.

Bitterroot Salish

The Flathead, Salish, Pend d'Oreille, Kalispel, Coeur d'Alene, Shushwap, and Colville peoples originally lived in this area and spoke the same language. When it became too difficult to feed so large a group, they divided into several different tribes, each developing a slightly different language.

Four tribes eventually became members of the Confederacy made by the government treaty of 1855. The lower Pend d'Oreilles and Kalispels who made their homelands in Camas Prairie and St. Ignatius were the first two. They shared hunting grounds to the north with the Kootenais, who were the third tribe involved. The Salish, the fourth major tribe to become treaty participants, were removed from their homeland in the Bitterroot valley after a long, bitter struggle. Although the past has been a long struggle for our parents, grandparents, and ancestors, the Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai cultures and traditions have survived and hope to be stronger in the future.

<http://www.skcc.edu/tribalhistory.html>

The Salish People have sometimes been referred to as The Flatheads. This is a misnomer that took shape shortly after Lewis and Clark came through the area. The Salish have also been referred to as Bitterroot Salish, in reference to part of their homeland, the Bitterroot Valley, south of the present day Missoula, Montana. In their own language, the people call themselves the Se'lis (pronounced Se'-lish). Salish is the common English rendition of the word and is used in most official tribal documents today (Salish-Pend Oreille Culture Committee, A Brief History 6).

The Salish are the easternmost tribe of people who traditionally speak a dialect from the Salishan language family, which extends from Montana all the way to the Pacific Coast and generally on the north side of the Columbia River.

The sprawling aboriginal territory of the Salish straddles both sides of the Continental Divide in what is now the state of Montana. At around 1750-1800, because of losses from epidemics and pressures from rifle-armed Blackfeet, the Salish focused their population into the Bitterroot Valley and the western portion of their overall aboriginal territory.

Today the Salish people are based on the Flathead Indian Reservation, a 1.2 million acre area North of Missoula, Montana. The reservation is part of the original homeland of the Pend d'Oreille. There are 6,961 enrolled members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai

Tribes, of this population 4,244 live on the reservation (*Montana Indians: Their History and Location*. Helena, Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2004 p. 28).